

October 7, 2002

Marlene H. Dortch  
Commission Secretary  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW, CY-B402  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Proceeding 02-306

Dear Commissioners:

In my capacity as State President of the Congress of California Seniors I am sending this letter to express our support for allowing full and open competition in the long distance telephone market. We are an umbrella organization for hundreds of affiliated groups with a combined membership of over 650,000 Californians.

The members of the Congress of California Seniors are active, informed and we watch with interest and concern the legislative and regulatory process in California and the nation. We watch our interests closely, particularly our fixed costs, such as the telephone bill. Many of our members are able to take advantage of Universal Life Line services that help keep them connected to their family and the community. We have a vested interest in the potential savings and increased competition in the telecommunications industry.

According to the Telecommunications and Research Action Center, Californians will save up to \$800 million in combined local toll and long distance calling in the first year after SBC Pacific Bell enters the long distance market. This is a savings we cannot afford to pass by.

By allowing telecommunications carriers to offer the full array of services, including long distance, our members can pick and choose the packages that provide them with the best value. In this way, our members can have more control over their expenses, resulting in a better quality of life over all.

We respectfully urge you to support our efforts to reduce expenses for the benefit of the community by allowing SBC Pacific Bell to compete for long distance.

Thank you,  
Henry L. "Hank" Lacayo, State President  
Congress of California Seniors  
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